

No.
170

Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES



ZERO! ZERO!

ALL TIME GREATS



DON BRADMAN was a born cricketer. Despite the fact that the experts laughed at his stance and style, Don proved himself by notching up high scores with fantastic ease for New South Wales.


By the time Don retired in 1948, he had scored a total of 27,984 runs, including 117 centuries. He holds the world record for the highest batting average per innings of any career in cricket with the amazing figure of 95.14. His average for test matches also stands as a world record at 99.94.

Another of his records, the feat of scoring 29 centuries in test matches, perhaps explains why at one time the whole England team was built around fast and spin bowlers to combat the menace of Bradman.

Knighted in 1949 for his services to cricket, Don Bradman had come a long way since he had been banned from playing in the local cricket teams because of his high scores!

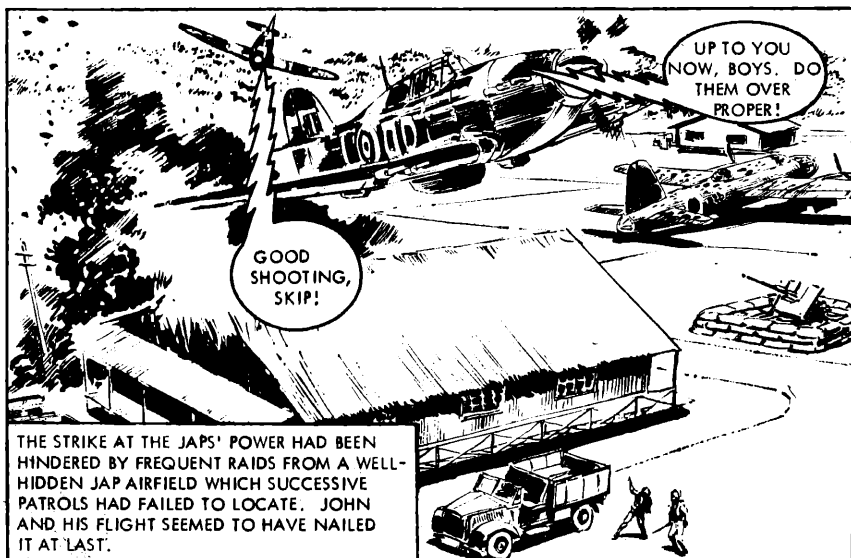
Another All Time Great - HERBERT SUTCLIFFE - Commando No. 169, on sale now!

ZERO! ZERO!



RED LEADER HERE.
THIS IS IT, CHAPS.
FOLLOW ME IN AND
PRANG IT GOOD
AND PROPER!

EARLY IN 1944, THE ALLIED FORCES WERE PREPARING AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE JAPS IN BURMA, LEADING A FLIGHT OF HURRICANES IN SEARCH OF A HIDDEN JAP AIRFIELD WAS FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN SAUNDERS, A YOUNG PILOT JUST POSTED FROM BRITAIN.

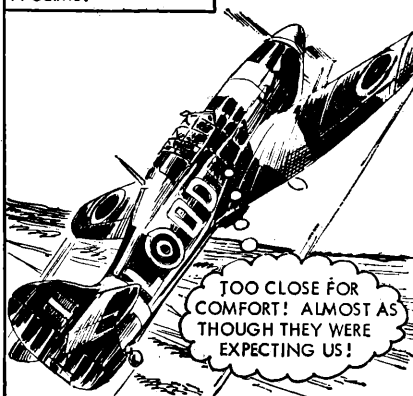


ALL WENT WELL FOR THE FIRST TWO MINUTLS. BUT THEN —



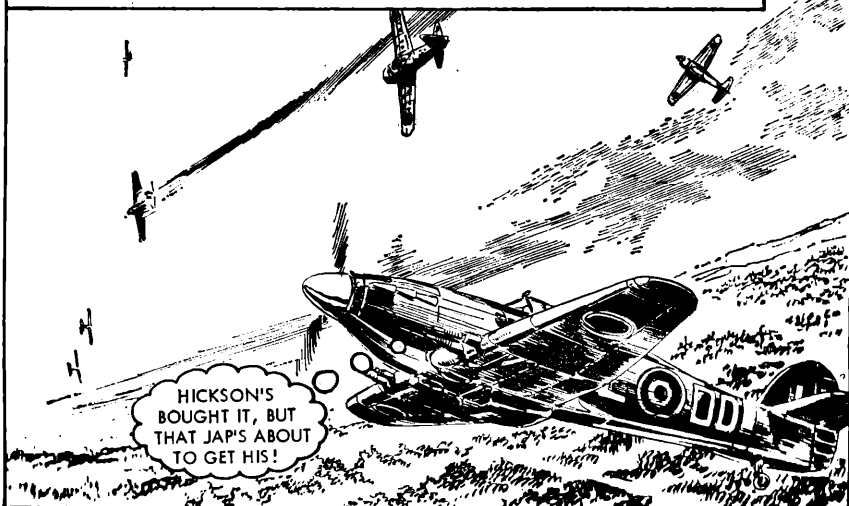
ZEROS AT EIGHT O'CLOCK, SKIPPER!

ALERTED TO THE DANGER FROM ABOVE, JOHN THREW HIS AGILE HURRICANE INTO A TIGHT HALF-ROLL FOLLOWED BY A CLIMB.



TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT! ALMOST AS THOUGH THEY WERE EXPECTING US!

IN THE NEXT INSTANT THE SKY WAS CHURNED INTO A WEIRD PATTERN OF ZEROS AND HURRICANES SPITTING DEATH AT EACH OTHER.

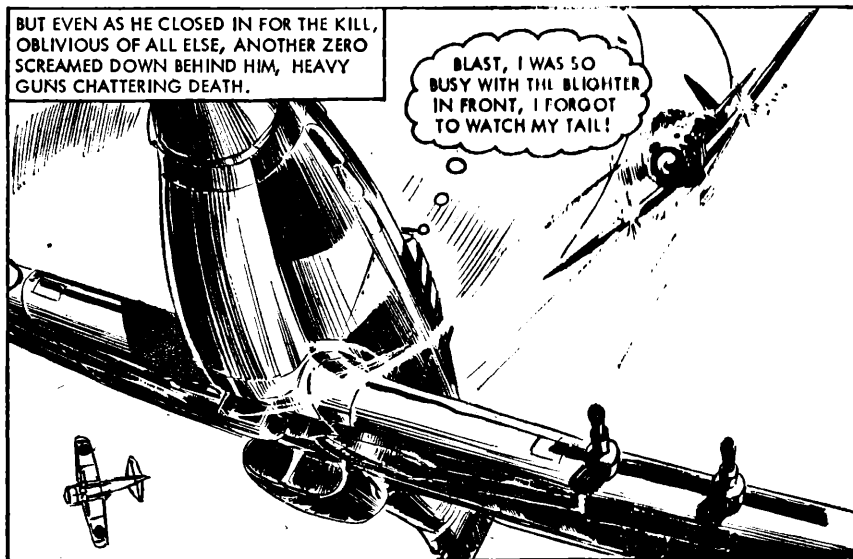


HICKSON'S BOUGHT IT, BUT THAT JAP'S ABOUT TO GET HIS!

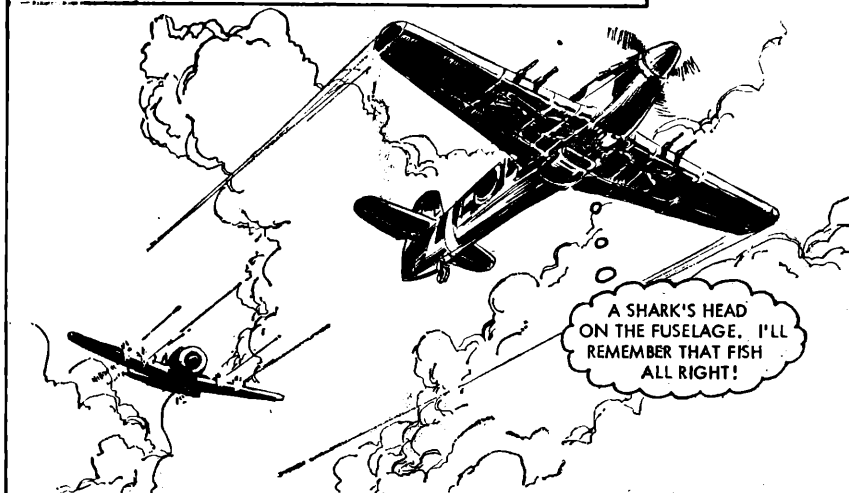
BOOSTING HIS ENGINE TO FULL THROTTLE, JOHN THREW THE DEADLY, SLEEK HURRICANE ROUND IN PURSUIT OF THE LONE ZERO, HIS FINGER CURLING ROUND THE FIRING BUTTON AS HE TRIGGERED OFF AN ACCURATE BURST.



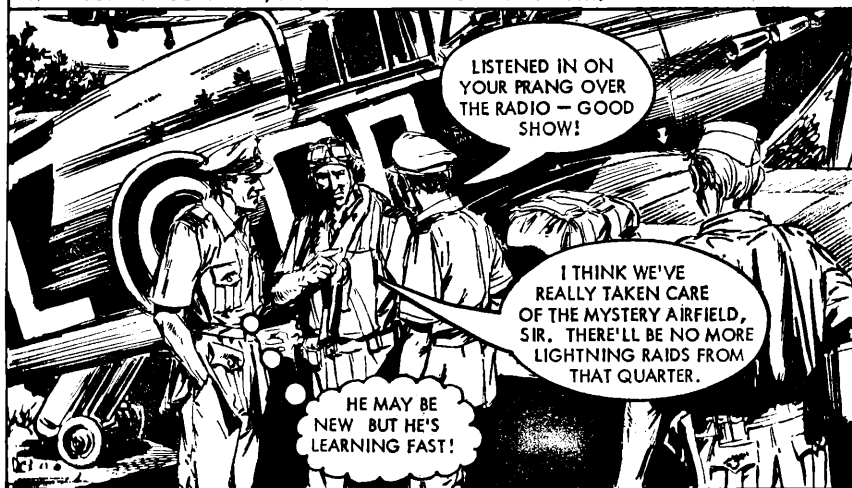
BUT EVEN AS HE CLOSED IN FOR THE KILL, OBLIVIOUS OF ALL ELSE, ANOTHER ZERO SCREAMED DOWN BEHIND HIM, HEAVY GUNS CHATTERING DEATH.



THE NEW ARRIVAL WAS A TOUGH ADVERSARY, WILY AND RESOURCEFUL. JOHN WAS ONLY SAVED FROM DISASTER BY A THICK CLOUD.



REGROUPING LATER, THE FLIGHT, EXCEPT FOR THE UNFORTUNATE HICKSON, MANAGED TO MAKE IT BACK TO BASE. SQUADRON-LEADER BRUCE WILDING WAS WAITING FOR THEM, WITH HIS SECOND IN COMMAND, FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JIMMY FORSYTH.



THE WORDS WERE SCARCELY OUT OF JOHN'S MOUTH, HOWEVER WHEN THE AIR-RAID WARNING BELL RANG.



BRUCE SWUNG ROUND TO JOHN.



THE ATTACKING FORCE OF JAP FIGHTERS AND BOMBERS PUT PAID TO ANY MORE EXPLANATIONS. JOHN AND THE OTHERS DASHED FOR THEIR AIRCRAFT, TAKING OFF AMIDST A HAIL OF BOMBS AND MACHINE-GUN FIRE.



WHILE MORE THE SKY WAS CRISS-CROSSED WITH PLANES SWOOPING, TURNING, FIRING.

THE SKIPPER WILL
CARPET ME FOR THIS!
THAT FIELD WE PRANGED
MUST HAVE BEEN A
FAKE.

JOHN HAD JUST SENT A ZERO EARTHWARD IN FLAMES
WHEN BRUCE'S VOICE CRACKLED OVER THE INTERCOM...

JOHN,
JIMMY'S BALED OUT.
SEE HIM SAFELY
DOWN.

WILCO,
SKIPPER!

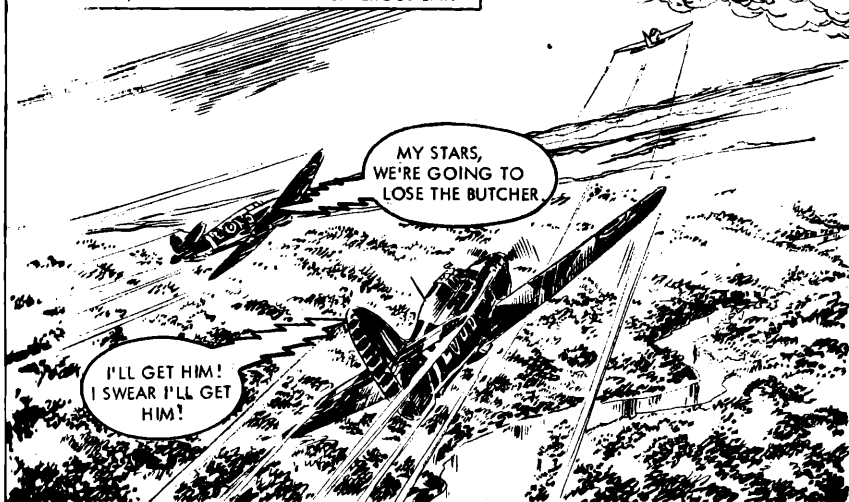
SUDDENLY, HOWEVER, A ZERO DIVED PAST JOHN'S HURRICANE, ITS GUNS SPITTING DEATH AT THE DEFENCELESS JIMMY!



BRUCE HAMMERED HOME A DEADLY BURST THEN PEELED OFF, JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE COWARDLY ATTACK ON JIMMY.



AND JOHN HURTLIED AFTER THE SHARK-NOSED ZERO, BUT THE SAME CLOUD THAT HAD
 AIDED JOHN, NOW SHIELDED THE MURDEROUS JAP.



JIMMY WAS DEAD WHEN THE STRETCHER-PARTY REACHED HIM. GRIMLY BRUCE AND JOHN WATCHED HIM BROUGHT IN AFTER THEY HAD LANDED AT BASE.



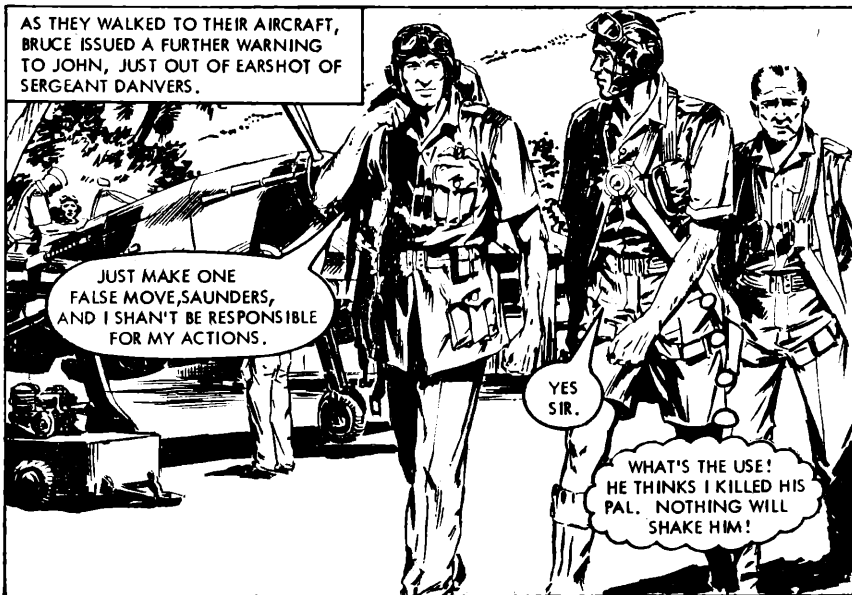
YOU BUNGLED THAT AIRFIELD JOB. YOU LET MY BEST FRIEND BE SLAUGHTERED BEFORE MY VERY EYES. I'LL GET YOU COURT-MARTIALED IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!



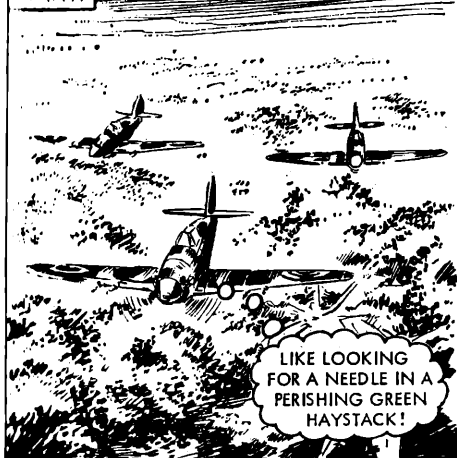
BUT BEFORE JOHN COULD CONTINUE FURTHER, BRUCE TURNED ON HIS HEEL AND STAMPED OFF. HIS MAIN CONSIDERATION NOW WAS TO FIND THE JAP AIRFIELD. BRUCE CALLED OUT EVERY MAN IN HIS BID FOR VENGEANCE.



AS THEY WALKED TO THEIR AIRCRAFT, BRUCE ISSUED A FURTHER WARNING TO JOHN, JUST OUT OF EARSHOT OF SERGEANT DANVERS.



THE THREE PLANES FLEW OVER THE ENDLESS GREEN JUNGLE, SCANNING THE TREES CLOSELY FOR ANY SIGN OF THE HIDDEN AIR-TRIP...



LIKE LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A PERISHING GREEN HAYSTACK!

BUT, JUST AS THEIR FUEL BEGAN TO RUN OUT...



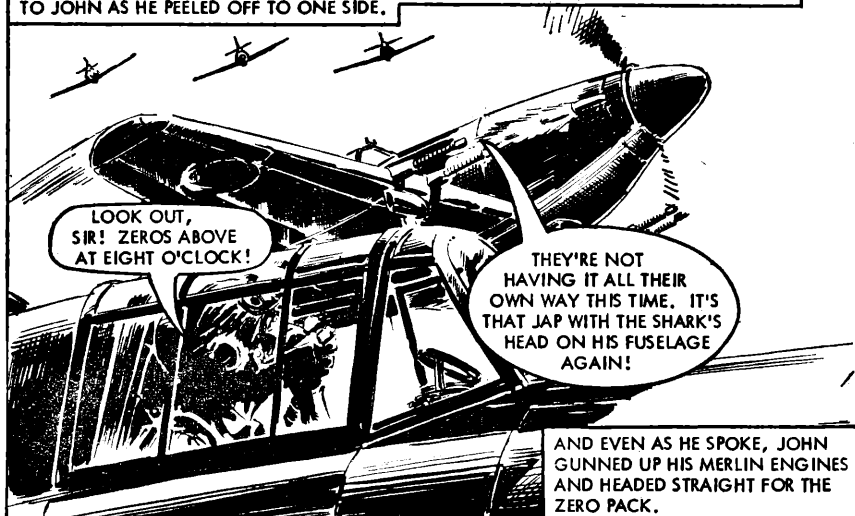
I THINK I SEE SOMETHING AMONGST THE TREES. COVER ME — I'M GOING DOWN FOR A LOOK.

BRUCE ANGLED HIS PLANE TO SPY OUT THE LAND WHEN, AS IF FROM NOWHERE, FOUR DEADLY ZEROS APPEARED ABOVE THEM, AS YET UNNOTICED.

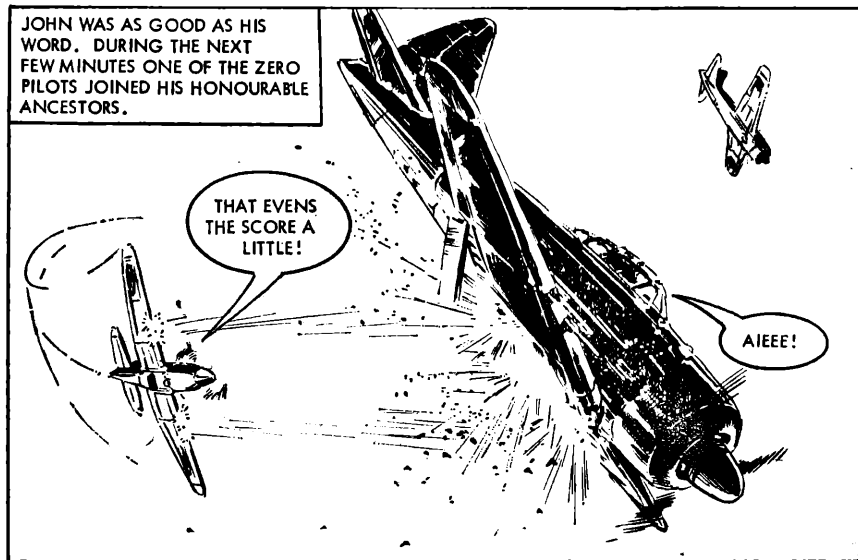


I TAKE THE ONE NEAR THE GROUND. THE REST OF YOU TAKE CARE OF THE OTHERS!

SERGEANT DANVERS WAS THE FIRST TO SPOT THE DANGER AND HE SHOUTED A WARNING TO JOHN AS HE PEELLED OFF TO ONE SIDE.



JOHN WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD. DURING THE NEXT FEW MINUTES ONE OF THE ZERO PILOTS JOINED HIS HONOURABLE ANCESTORS.



BUT DANVERS LURED ONE ZERO AWAY FROM THE REST, THEN TURNED A COMPLETE LOOP TO SEE HIS FLYING BULLETS DISINTEGRATE THE TAIL SECTION OF THE DUPED ZERO.

YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE FALLEN FOR
THAT ONE, NIP!

BRUCE WAS NOT SO LUCKY. HE'D JUST STARTED TO CLIMB CLEAR OF THE JUNGLE WHEN THE HOWL OF THE DIVING ZERO HERALDED A SQUIRT OF BULLETS.

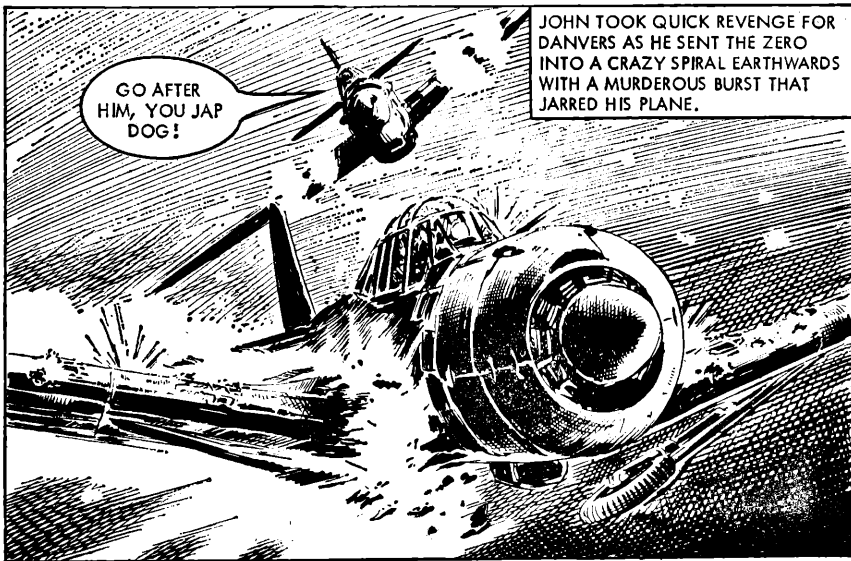
THE JAP'S GOT
MY ENGINE. LOOKS
LIKE A PARACHUTE RIDE
FOR ME!

BUT LADY LUCK'S SMILE HAD TURNED SOUR FOR THE HURRICANE PILOTS NOW. BOB DANVERS FELL FOUL OF A ZERO AS HIS HURRICANE SIMPLY BURST INTO A HUGE BALL OF FLAME.



GO AFTER HIM, YOU JAP DOG!

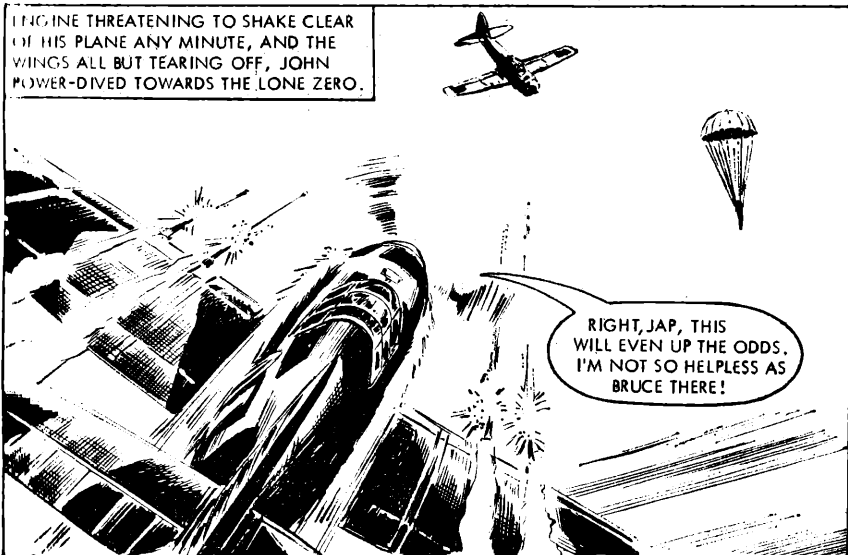
JOHN TOOK QUICK REVENGE FOR DANVERS AS HE SENT THE ZERO INTO A CRAZY SPIRAL EARTHWARDS WITH A MURDEROUS BURST THAT JARRED HIS PLANE.



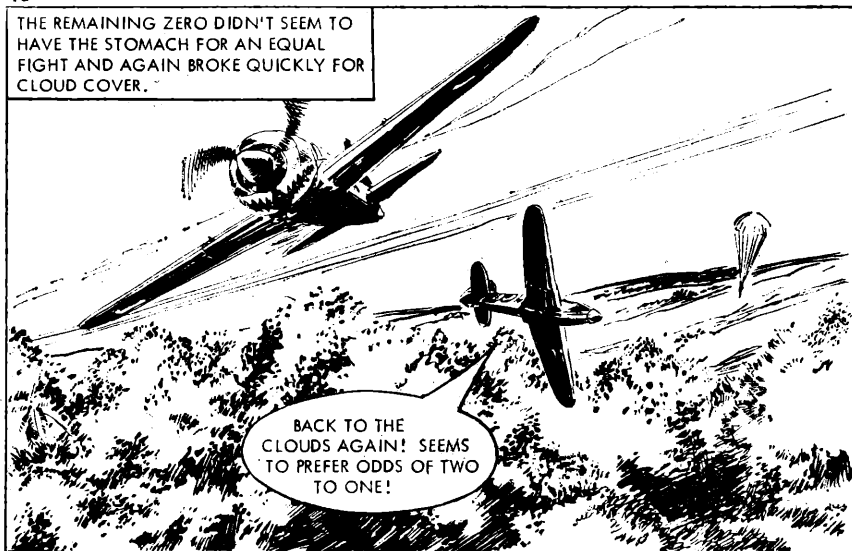
HE CLIMBED YET AGAIN, JOHN SAW THE SHARK-NOSED ZERO PREPARING TO SHOOT UP BRUCE AS HE DANGLED HELPLESSLY AT THE END OF HIS PARACHUTE.



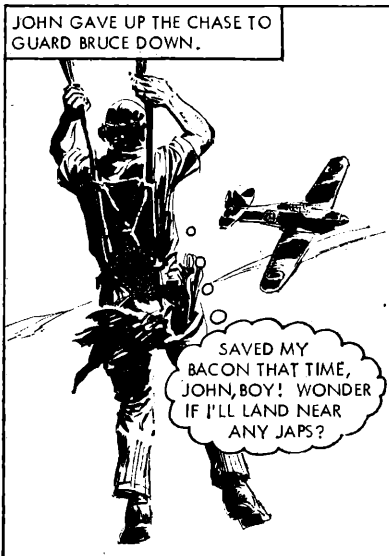
ENGINE THREATENING TO SHAKE CLEAR OF HIS PLANE ANY MINUTE, AND THE WINGS ALL BUT TEARING OFF, JOHN POWER-DIVED TOWARDS THE LONE ZERO.



THE REMAINING ZERO DIDN'T SEEM TO HAVE THE STOMACH FOR AN EQUAL FIGHT AND AGAIN BROKE QUICKLY FOR CLOUD COVER.



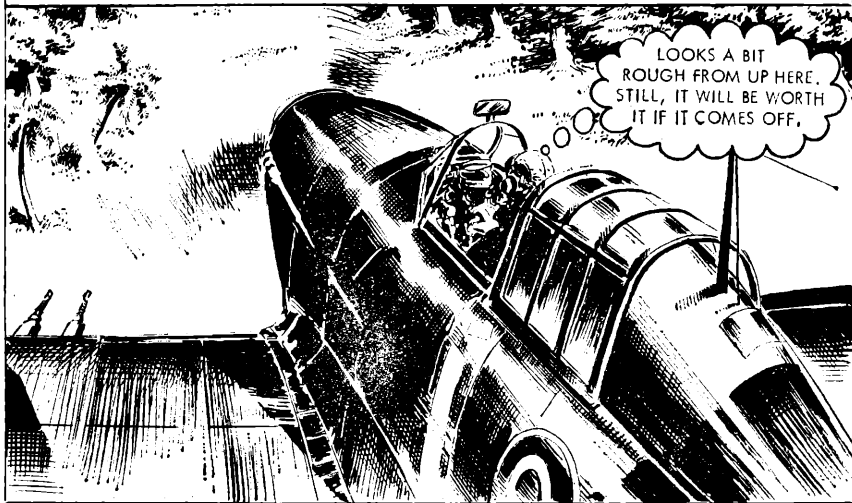
JOHN GAVE UP THE CHASE TO GUARD BRUCE DOWN.



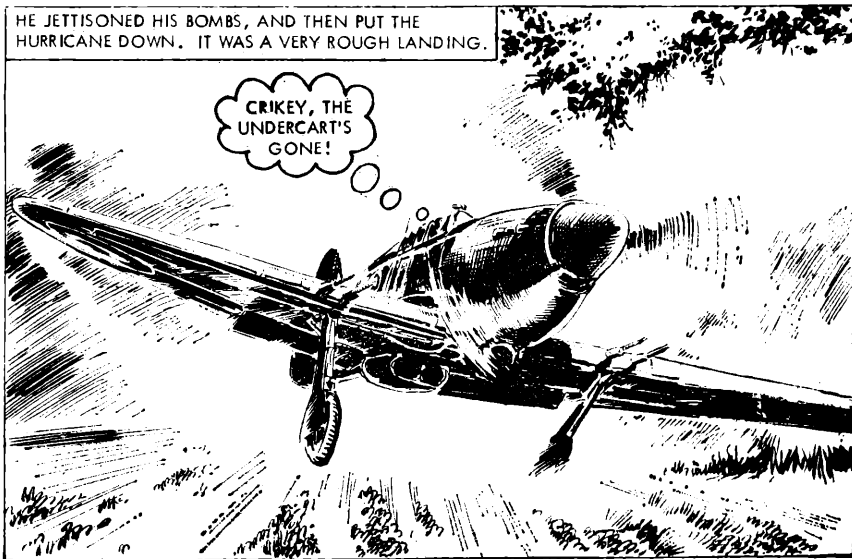
AS HE CIRCLED, JOHN NOTICED A SMALL OPEN SPACE NEAR TO WHERE BRUCE WOULD LAND.



ONCE THE IDEA WAS IN HIS HEAD, JOHN FOUND IT HARDER AND HARDER TO FORGET IT. HE WAS TAKING A RISK, BUT HE FELT JUSTIFIED IF IT WOULD SAVE A FINE PILOT LIKE BRUCE.

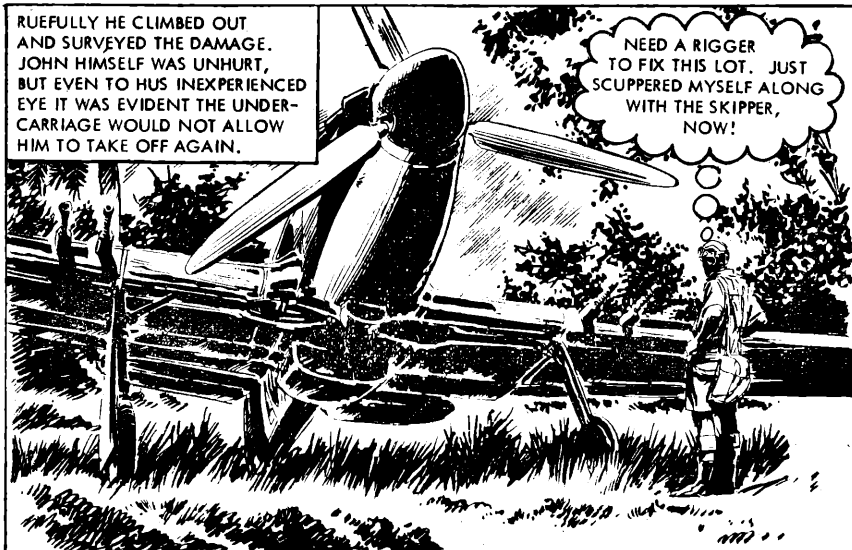


HE JETTISONED HIS BOMBS, AND THEN PUT THE HURRICANE DOWN. IT WAS A VERY ROUGH LANDING.



RUEFULLY HE CLIMBED OUT AND SURVEYED THE DAMAGE. JOHN HIMSELF WAS UNHURT, BUT EVEN TO HIS INEXPERIENCED EYE IT WAS EVIDENT THE UNDER-CARRIAGE WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO TAKE OFF AGAIN.

NEED A RIGGER TO FIX THIS LOT. JUST SCUPPERED MYSELF ALONG WITH THE SKIPPER, NOW!



MEANWHILE BRUCE'S LUCK HAD RUN OUT TOO. HE HAD LANDED SAFELY, BUT IN THE WRONG HANDS.

GRAB HIM!

HE WILL MAKE GOOD BAYONET PRACTICE!

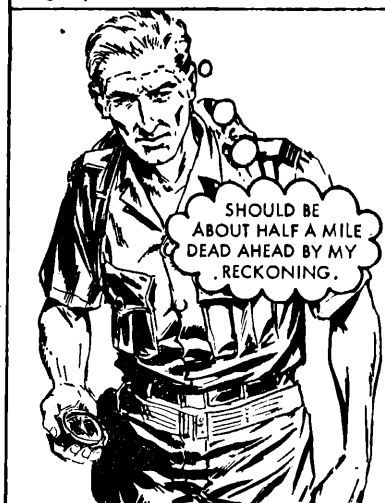
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME, YOU MURDERING ANIMALS!



JOHN, MEANWHILE, PREPARED TO FIND
BRUCE.



FINDING BRUCE WAS EASIER SAID THAN
DONE.



JOHN WASN'T FAR OUT, BUT WHEN HE FINALLY FOUND BRUCE'S WHEREABOUTS, A STRANGE
SIGHT MET HIS EYES.



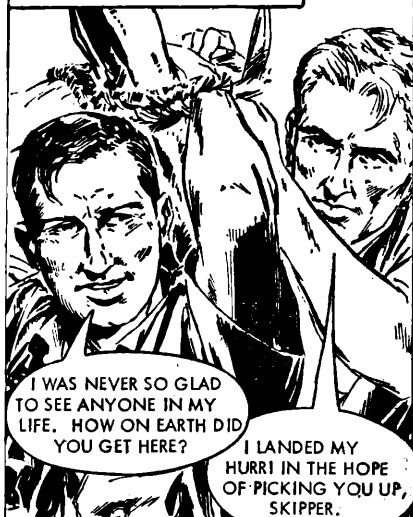
JOHN WASTED NO TIME.



THE OTHER TWO JAPS SWUNG THEIR RIFLES UP, BUT JOHN SWIFTLY SHOT THEM DOWN LIKE A TOP WILD WEST GUNMAN.



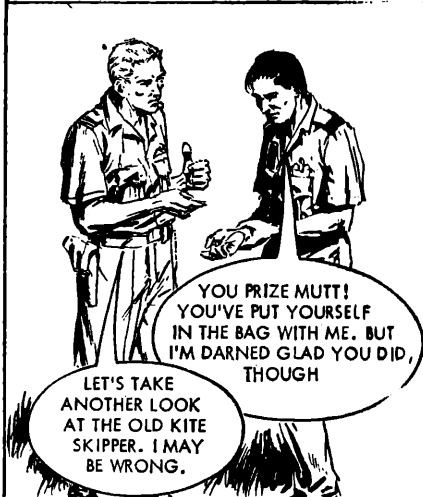
QUICKLY JOHN SET BRUCE FREE.



I WAS NEVER SO GLAD TO SEE ANYONE IN MY LIFE. HOW ON EARTH DID YOU GET HERE?

I LANDED MY HURRI IN THE HOPE OF PICKING YOU UP, SKIPPER.

JOHN EXPLAINED THAT THE PLANE WAS IN A DICEY CONDITION.



LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE OLD KITE SKIPPER. I MAY BE WRONG.

YOU PRIZE MUTT! YOU'VE PUT YOURSELF IN THE BAG WITH ME. BUT I'M DARNED GLAD YOU DID, THOUGH

THEY TRACKED BACK TO THE HURRICANE. BRUCE TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE BUCKLED UNDERCARRIAGE, AND SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY.



NEAREST WORKSHOP IS A HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES AWAY, SKIPPER. I'LL TRY THE RADIO, SEE IF WE CAN RAISE ANYTHING.

AFRAID THIS IS A WRITE-OFF AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, JOHN. IT'S A WORK-SHOP JOB.

JOHN CLIMBED INTO THE COCKPIT AND SWITCHED ON HIS RADIO.

HULLO BASE —
HULLO BASE! ABLE
CHARLIE VICTOR
CALLING.

NO GOOD
BRUCE, THE SET'S
BOUGHT IT
TOO.

THEY CHECKED THE MAP AND DECIDED
THAT THEIR BASE WAS ROUGHLY A
HUNDRED AND THIRTY MILES AWAY.
THEN THEY CHECKED THEIR MEAGRE
RATIONS.

EMERGENCY
RATIONS FOR FOUR
DAYS. JUST ABOUT
ENOUGH, I
RECKON.

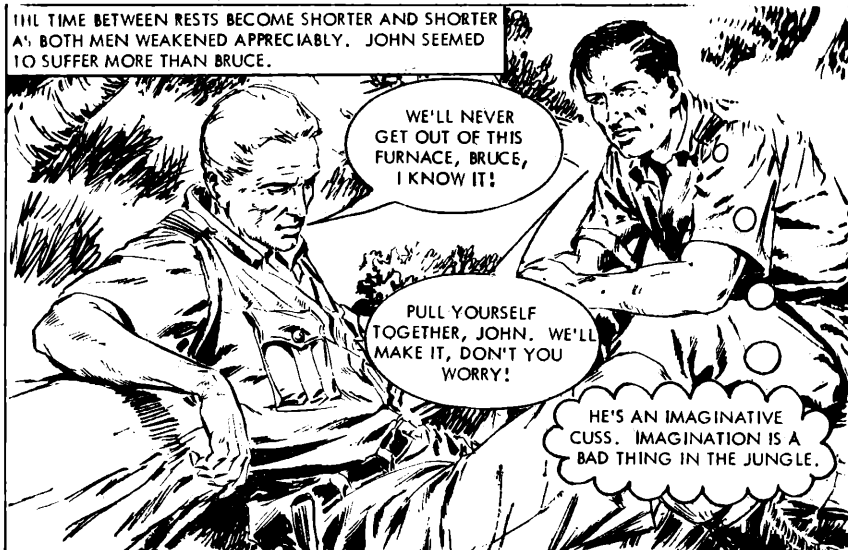
IF THE JAPS
DON'T GET US
FIRST!

THEY BEGAN THE GRIM SLOG THROUGH THE DANK, STEAMING JUNGLE, AFTER DESTROYING JOHN'S HURRICANE. THEY KEPT ON THE MOVE THROUGH THE HEAT OF THE AFTERNOON TO GET AS FAR FROM THE AREA AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE JAPS DISCOVERED THE SMOKING PLANE.

THESE BLOOMING
TREES GET ON YOUR
NERVES!

STEADY, JOHN!
JUST CONCENTRATE
ON WALKING, AND
KEEP AN EYE ON
THAT COMPASS!

THE TIME BETWEEN RESTS BECAME SHORTER AND SHORTER AS BOTH MEN WEAKENED APPRECIABLY. JOHN SEEMED TO SUFFER MORE THAN BRUCE.



THEN, AS THEY RESTED, THEY HEARD THE FAR-OFF THROB OF AERO ENGINES.



BUT JOHN'S ONLY THOUGHT
WAS RESCUE — RESCUE FROM
THE GREEN JUNGLE HADES.

WE MUST SIGNAL
THEM! WHERE'S THE
PLANE? CAN YOU
SEE IT, BRUCE?

COME BACK,
YOU FOOL! THERE
MAY BE JAPS
ABOUT!

HE RUSHED FRANTICALLY TOWARDS A BREAK IN THE TREES, THEN STOPPED SHORT IN HIS
TRACKS AT THE SIGHT WHICH MET HIS EYES.

JAPS!

BEFORE HE COULD RECOVER FROM HIS SURPRISE, THEY HAD FORMED A DEADLY RING RIGHT AROUND HIM.



BRUCE WATCHED THE JAPS PREPARE TO MARCH JOHN OFF FROM THE COVER OF THE TREES AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING.



BRUCE FOLLOWED THE JAPS AS THEY SET OFF WITH JOHN, TAKING CARE TO KEEP OUT OF SIGHT.



AFTER A SHORT MARCH THEY CAME TO ANOTHER LARGE CLEARING IN WHICH WERE A NUMBER OF HUTS. JOHN NOTED HOW THE FOLIAGE OF THE TREES TENDED TO GROW OVER THE VILLAGE, MAKING IT HARD TO SPOT FROM THE AIR.



THEY MARCHED HIM STRAIGHT OVER TO A HUT AND THREW HIM INSIDE.



MEANWHILE BRUCE SURVEYED THE CLEARING FROM COVER —



DECIDING TO RISK IT, BRUCE WORKED HIS WAY CAUTIOUSLY INTO THE CLEARING, UNTIL HE HAD REACHED THE SHELTER OF JOHN'S HUT.



THEN, JUST AS HE WAS PREPARING TO MAKE HIS WAY INTO THE HUT, A JAP SOLDIER RUSHED PAST, FURIOUSLY BLOWING A WHISTLE.

THE ALARM!
SURELY NO ONE'S
SPOTTED ME
YET?



BUT EVEN AS BRUCE PONDERED, MEN SWARMED ALL OVER THE CLEARING, HAULING STRENUOUSLY ON DOZENS OF ROPES.



AS THE ROPES WERE SLOWLY PAID OUT, THE TREES WERE GENTLY LOWERED TO THE GROUND, EXPOSING A LARGE, PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN RUNWAY. THIS WAS THE HIDDEN AIRSTRIP.

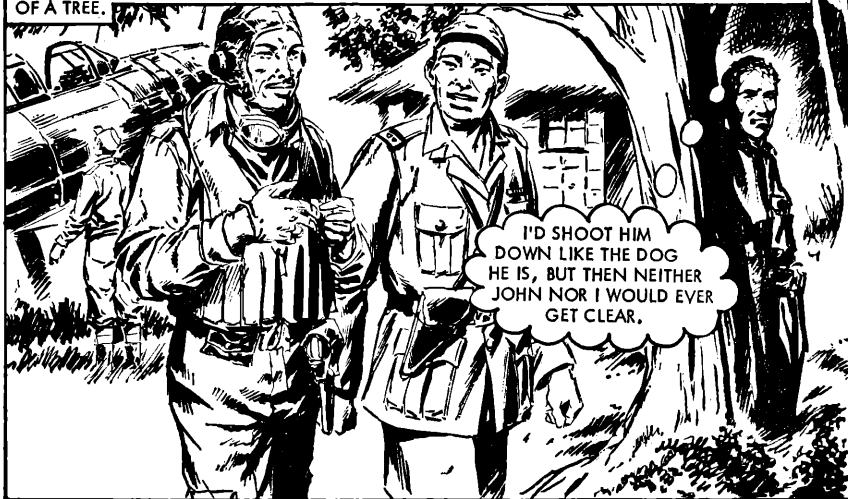
BRUCE DOUBLED BACK TO THE JUNGLE EDGE, WATCHING IN AMAZEMENT AS OTHER JAPS TOOK CAMOUFLAGE FOLIAGE OFF HIDDEN PLANES.



STILL GOGGLING AT THE CAMOUFLAGE OF THE AIRSTRIP, BRUCE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO REALITY SMARTLY WHEN A LONE ZERO SWUNG INTO LAND.



THE ZERO ROLLED TO A HALT AND THE MURDERING PILOT JUMPED DOWN. HE WALKED TO HIS HUT WITH A COLLEAGUE, PASSING QUITE CLOSE TO BRUCE, AS HE HID IN THE SHADOWS OF A TREE.



JOHN, TOO, HAD BEEN THINKING OF FREEDOM WHEN HIS HUT DOOR BURST OPEN TO REVEAL THREE SURLY JAPS.





MOVING QUICKLY DESPITE HIS WEIGHT, THE OFFICER LEAPT SWIFTLY TO HIS FEET AND SLASHED A STINGING BACK-HAND BLOW ACROSS JOHN'S FACE.



BRUCE, MEANWHILE, HAD MANAGED TO SNEAK UP TO THE HUT AND HELPLESSLY WATCHED JOHN BEING SAVAGELY BEATEN.



THE BRUTAL QUESTIONING CONTINUED.



JOHN WAS SAVAGELY BEATEN BY THE OFFICER, BUT HE STUBBORNLY REFUSED TO GIVE WAY.



THINKING ROUND THE JUNGLE EDGE,
BRUCE WATCHED JOHN BEING DRAGGED
BACK TO HIS HUT BY TWO JAP GUARDS.



MUST GET HIM
OUT BEFORE THE NEXT
SESSION. HE CAN'T STAND
MUCH MORE OF THAT!

AS THE SWIFT TROPICAL DARKNESS FELL, BRUCE CREPT TO THE BACK
OF THE HUT AND QUIETLY BEGAN PULLING AWAY THE ROUGH TIMBER.



ONE NOISE TOO
MANY AND I'LL BE THE
NEXT PUNCHBAG FOR THAT
JAP SWAB!

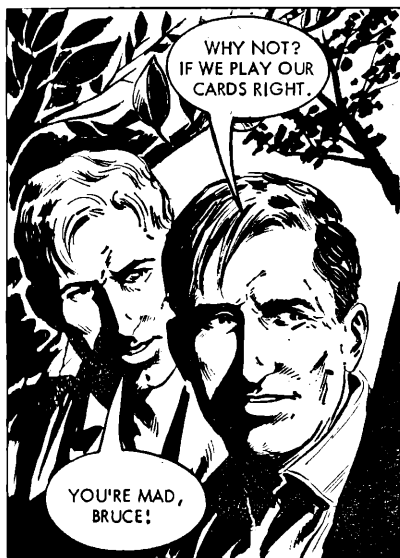
FEVERISHLY BRUCE TORE THE BOARDING FREE. LUCK AND THE NOISE OF REVVING AIRCRAFT HELPED HIM. SOON HE WAS THROUGH.



IT WAS A TIGHT SQUEEZE, BUT AFTER A STRONG PULL FROM BRUCE, JOHN WAS FREE.



BUT THEIR ESCAPE WAS CUT SHORT BY BRUCE SLITHERING TO A HALT AT THE JUNGLE EDGE WHEN HE SPOTTED JAP BOMBERS BEING WHEELED INTO POSITION ON THE RUNWAY.



THERE WAS NO STOPPING BRUCE ONCE HE HAD AN IDEA IN HIS HEAD.

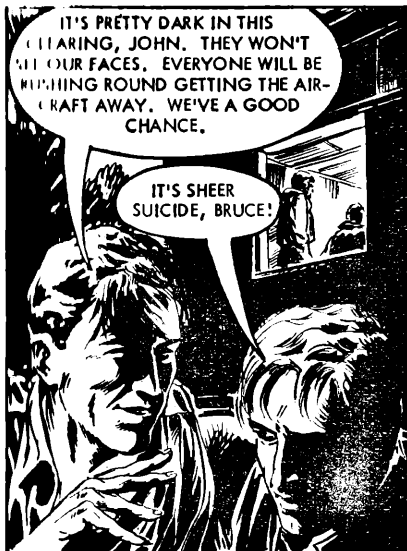


JOHN HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO FOLLOW BRUCE. BOTH MEN RAN ACROSS TO THE HUT AT A CROUCH AND PEERED IN.



BRUCE EXPLAINED HIS PLAN. JOHN'S DOUBTS GREW AS HE TALKED.





THE FIRST TWO RAN OFF TOWARDS THEIR WAITING PLANE. THE SECOND PAIR APPEARED AFTER A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS INTERVAL, TO BE TAKEN CARE OF VERY PROFESSIONALLY BY JOHN AND BRUCE.



QUICKLY THEY DRAGGED THE INERT JAPS INTO THE COVER OF THE TREES.



THEY QUICKLY STRIPPED THE FLYING-SUITS OFF THE JAPS, SCRAMBLING INTO THEM WITH ALL SPEED.



AS THEY TRUSSED THE JAPS WITH THEIR OWN SHIRTS, A JAP OFFICER RUSHED INTO THE HUT SEARCHING FOR THE TWO PILOTS.



AS THEY EMERGED FROM THE JUNGLE, THEY SAW THE JAP OFFICER STORM OUT OF THE HUT. HE COULDN'T FAIL TO SEE THEM.



THE OFFICER SPOTTED THEM ALL RIGHT, BUT WAS TOO ANGRY AT THE THOUGHT OF TWO PILOTS HOLDING BACK THE WHOLE OPERATION TO NOTICE THEIR FACES AS THEY RAN PAST.



STILL UNBELIEVING, JOHN FOUND HIMSELF RUNNING BESIDE BRUCE.

WE MADE IT!
THANKS THE OBSERVER'S
SEAT WITH YOU.

LET ME GET MY
HANDS ON THAT GUN.
AT LEAST I CAN SHOOT A
FEW JAPS IF THEY SPOT
US!

THE JAP MECHANICS HAD ALREADY STARTED THE ENGINE IN READINESS.

HOPE I CAN
REMEMBER THOSE
BLESSED CONTROLS.

I HOPE SO
TOO!

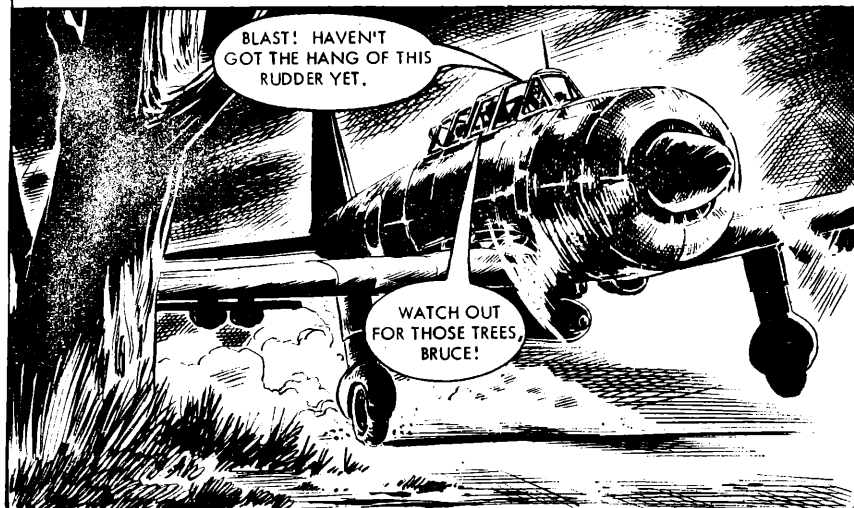
ONE BY ONE THE PLANES TAXIED FORWARD AND TOOK OFF.
BRUCE TOOK A HURRIED LOOK AROUND THE COCKPIT.

I THINK I'VE GOT
IT. MY MEMORY
HAD BETTER HOLD
OUT.

THEIR PLANE WAS THE LAST IN THE LINE. SLOWLY IT BEGAN TO ROLL FORWARD.



SUDDENLY, TO JOHN'S HORROR THE AIRCRAFT SWUNG TOWARDS THE SIDE OF THE AIRSTRIP AS BRUCE TAXIED TOWARDS THE TAKE-OFF POINT.



TAXI-ING WITH ALL HIS SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE OF FLYING, BRUCE PUT THE PLANE BACK ON AN EVEN COURSE.



BRUCE, HOWEVER, NOW HAD THE PLANE UNDER CONTROL AND REVVED IT UP TO SCATTER THE MECHANICS ON ALL SIDES.



ALL AT ONCE THE PLANE WAS AIRBORNE AND BRUCE DREW IN ONE LARGE, GRATEFUL BREATH.

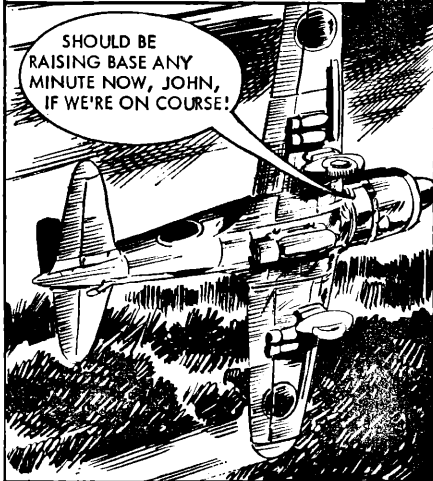
I NEVER THOUGHT FLYING COULD BE SO BEAUTIFUL!

CHECK OUR BEARINGS, JOHN. SEE WHETHER THOSE BIRDS ARE HEADING THE WAY WE WANT TO GO!

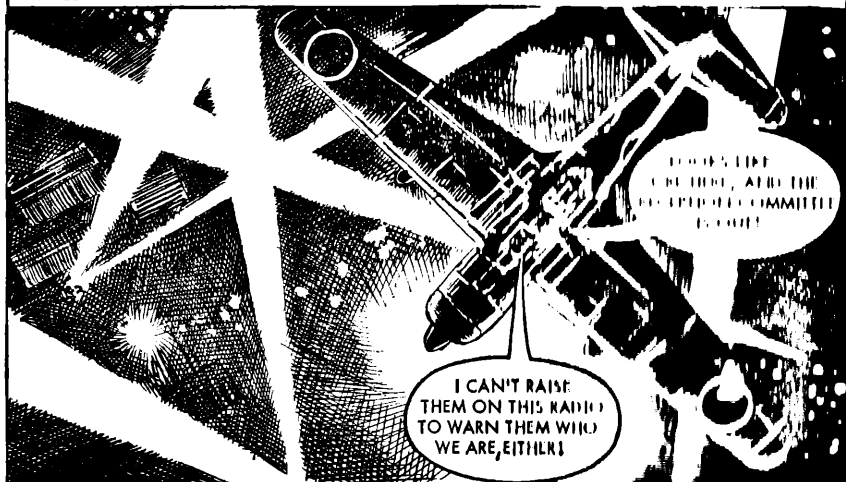


THE OTHER PLANES WERE SOON LOST IN THE DARKNESS. THEN FOLLOWED A STEADY THIRTY-MINUTE FLIGHT.

SHOULD BE RAISING BASE ANY MINUTE NOW, JOHN, IF WE'RE ON COURSE!



JOHN'S NAVIGATION WAS SPOT ON. IT WAS WITH GLEE THEY AT LAST SPOTTED THEIR BASE, BUT THIS TURNED TO COLD HORROR WHEN SEARCHLIGHTS STANNED UP TO MEET THEM, FOLLOWED BY DEADLY A.A. SHELLS.



THEY WERE FACED WITH THE AWFUL PROSPECT OF BEING SHOT DOWN BY THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AFTER HAVING CARRIED OUT A DARING PLANE SNATCH THAT WOULD HAVE MADE EVEN THE BRAVEST MEN QUAIL.



PUTTING THE PLANE'S NOSE DOWN, BRUCE DIVED DOWN AS FAST AS HE SAFELY COULD, PRAYING THE SEARCHLIGHTS WOULDN'T CATCH HIM SQUARE IN THEIR BEAMS.



IT WAS LIKE DIVING THROUGH A HAIL STORM OF DEATH, BUT EVENTUALLY BRUCE TOUCHED DOWN AND BROUGHT THE SIEVED PLANE TO A HALT.



AS THEY ROLLED TO A HALT, ARMED MEN RACED TOWARDS THEM.



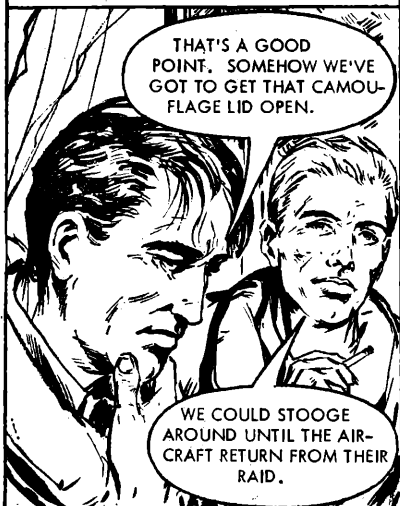
THE RECEPTION PARTY MEANT BUSINESS. ANGRY MUZZLES POINTED MENACINGLY UP AT JOHN AND BRUCE.



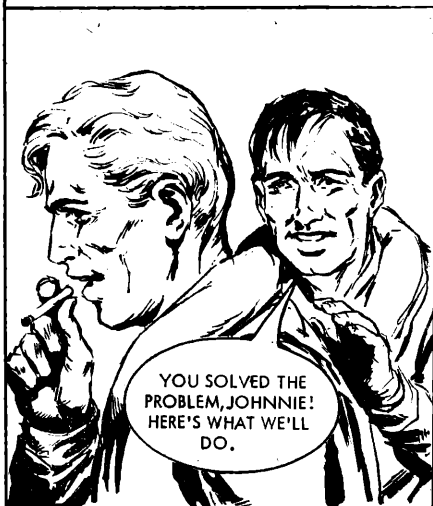
BEFORE HIS MEN COULD RECOVER FROM THEIR ASTONISHMENT AT HIS ESCAPE, BRUCE HAD THEM IN THE BRIEFING-HUT, TELLING THEM ALL HE HAD DISCOVERED.



BRUCE REALISED THAT THEY DID HAVE A VERY REAL PROBLEM.



JOHN'S SUGGESTION SPARKED OFF AN IDEA IN BRUCE'S BRAIN.



THERE WAS NO STOPPING BRUCE NOW HE HAD FINALLY FOUND THE WAY OUT.

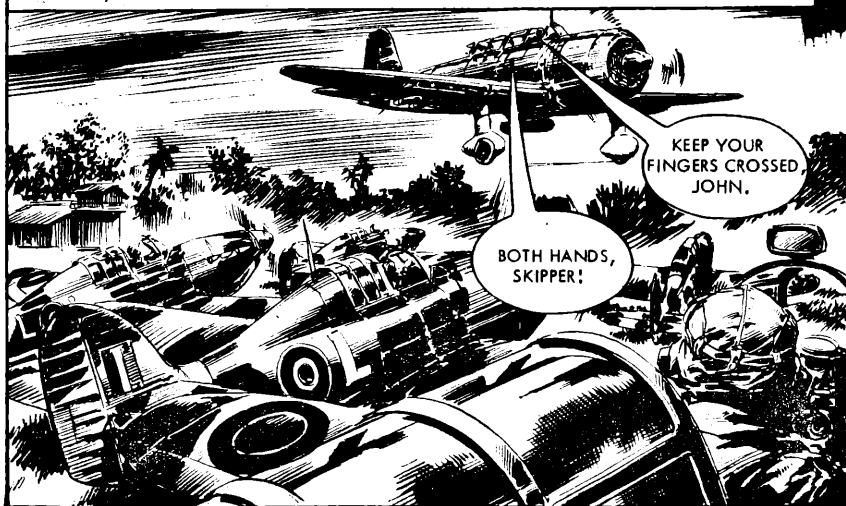


JOHN WAS SHATTERED AT THE THOUGHT OF FLYING BACK TO THE JAP AIRSTRIP IN THE CAPTURED PLANE AFTER THE TREATMENT HE HAD RECEIVED THERE.





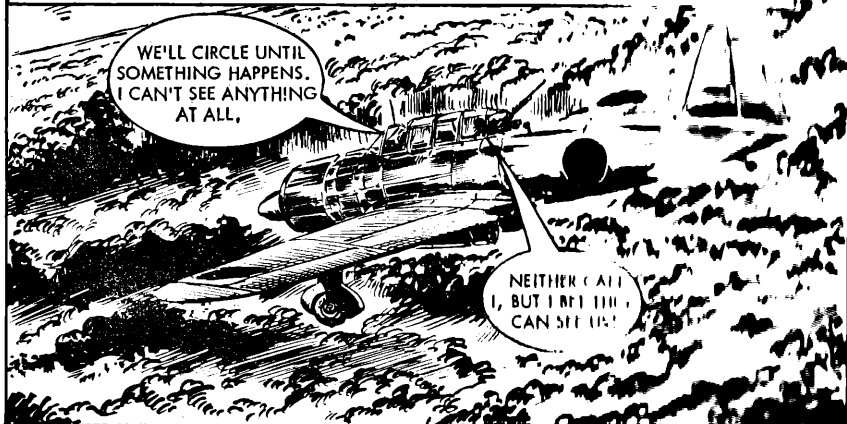
AT DAWN, WHEN THE LAST TOUCHES MADE THE JAP PLANE APPEAR AS GOOD AS NEW, BRUCE TOOK OFF, THE WHOLE HURRICANE SQUADRON FOLLOWING HIM INTO BATTLE.



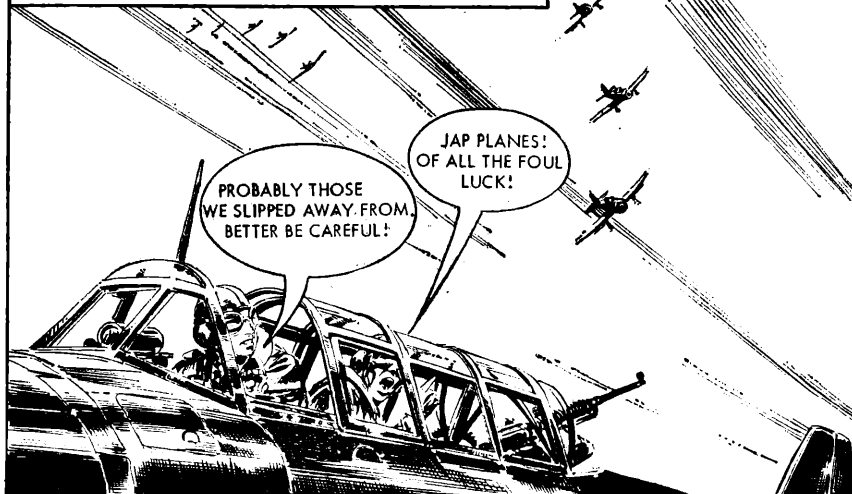
SOME DISTANCE FROM THE TARGET THE HURRICANES FELL AWAY, FOLLOWING BROSIE'S ORDERS.



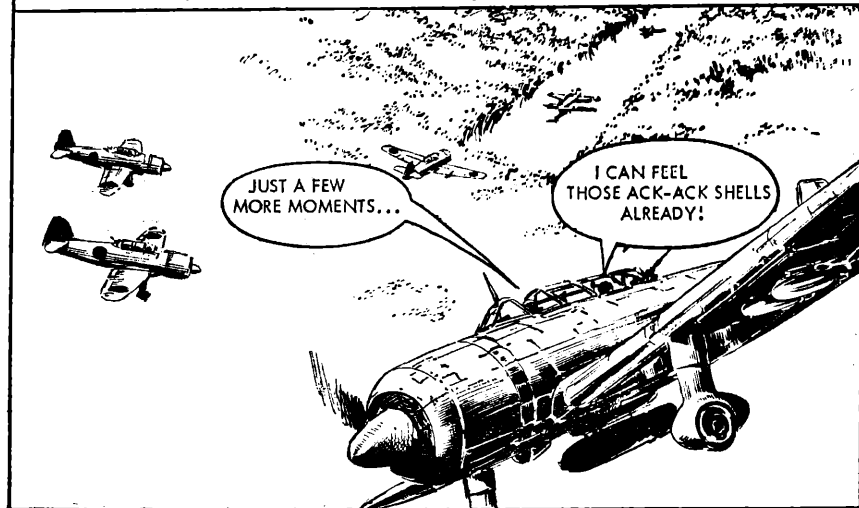
THEY APPROACHED THE HIDDEN AIRSTRIP ALONE...THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A THING, THE JUNGLE BELOW LOOKING JUST LIKE ANY OTHER AREA OF JUNGLE.

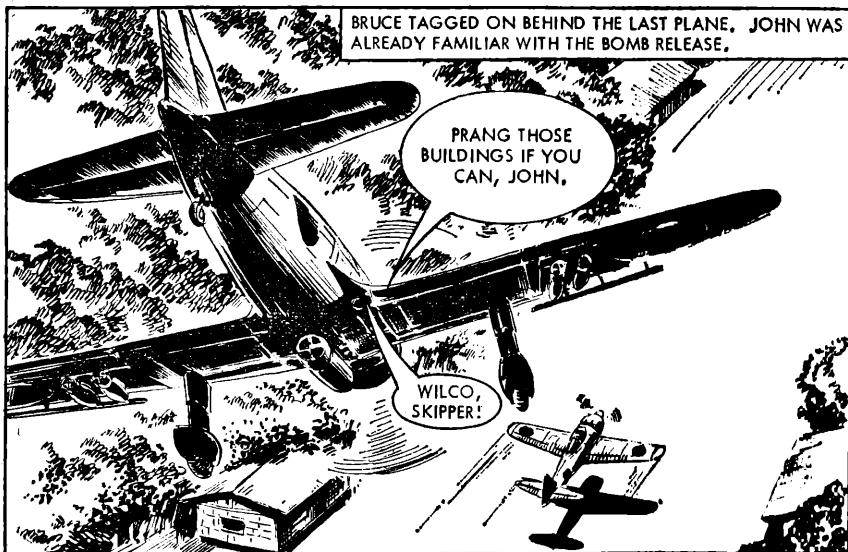


AS THEY SLOWLY CIRCLED ABOVE THE JUNGLE AIRSTRIP, THE CAMOUFLAGED SCREEN SLOWLY OPENED. THEN —

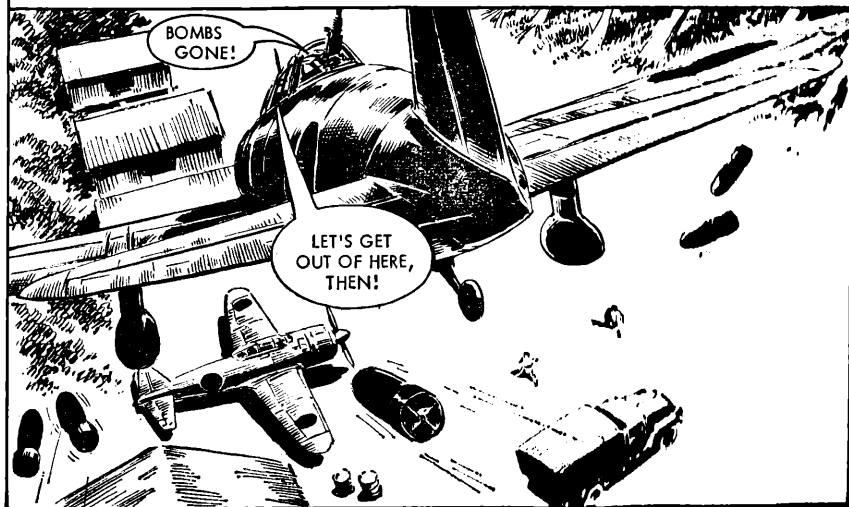


THE JAP PILOTS DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE ANYTHING STRANGE ABOUT THE CIRCLING PLANE, BRUCE STOOGED AROUND AS THE OTHERS LANDED.





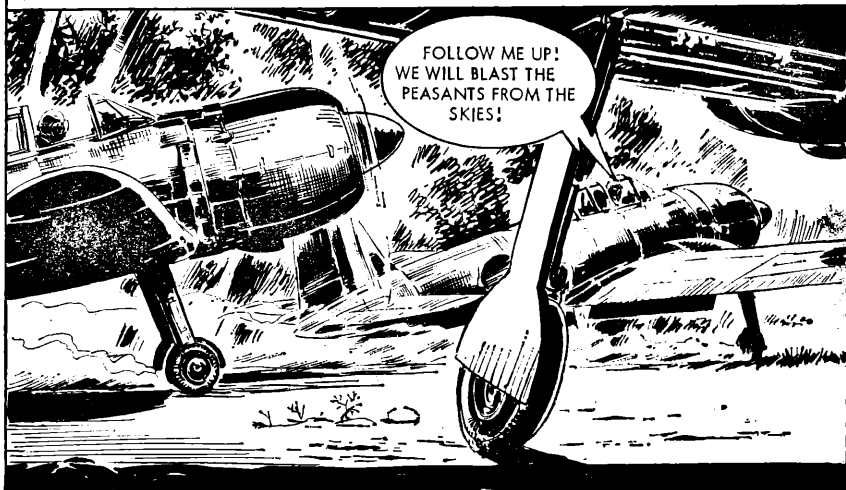
THERE WAS NO POINT IN HANGING BACK NOW. BRUCE OPENED THE THROTTLE AND THE PLANE ROARED OVER THE AIRSTRIP WHILE THE BOMBS FELL LAZILY EARTHWARDS.



FASCINATED, THE JAPS WATCHED THE BOMBS FALL FROM THEIR OWN PLANE. THEN, AS THEY REALISED THEIR DANGER AND RACED FOR COVER, THE WHOLE AIRSTRIP SHOOK VIOLENTLY AS THE BOMBS DETONATED.



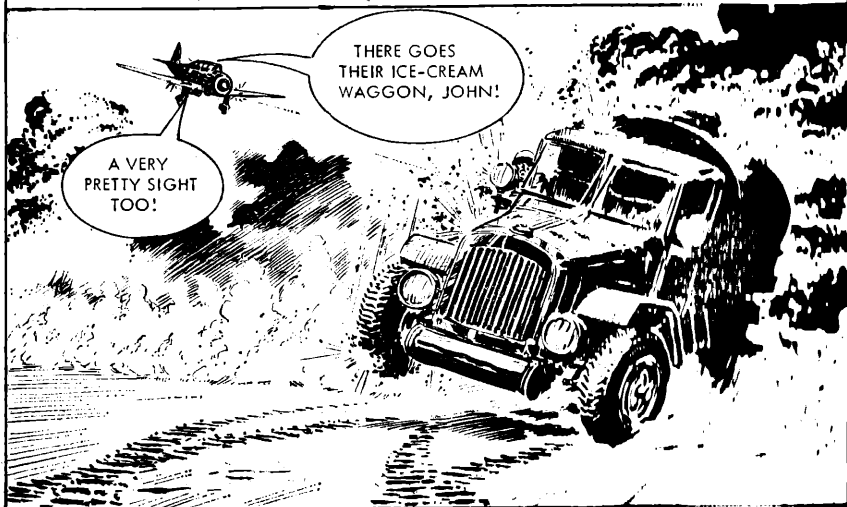
THE JAPS WERE NOT SLOW TO REACT. SEVERAL ZEROS TOOK THE AIR AT ONCE, THE ZERO WITH THE SHARK'S HEAD PAINTED ON ITS NOSE IN THE LEAD.



BY NOW THE OTHER HURRICANES HAD ARRIVED AND A FULL SCALE BATTLE WAS RAGING.



BRUCE AND JOHN SWUNG INTO THE ATTACK AGAIN, THIS TIME FINDING A JAP PIROU BOWLER AS THEIR TARGET.



THE HURRICANES PRESSED HOME THE ATTACK VIGOROUSLY DESPITE THE SNARLING ZEROS WHICH HAD MANAGED TO TAKE OFF.



BRUCE WAS IN HIS ELEMENT, SHOOTING UP ANYTHING THAT MOVED, EITHER ON THE GROUND OR IN THE AIR. THEN JOHN GAVE A SHOUT.



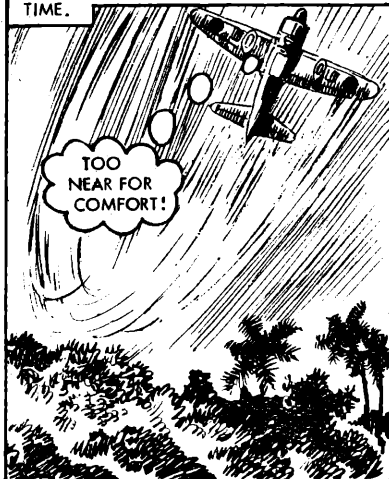
THE ZERO'S MACHINE-GUNS RAKED THE CABIN, CATCHING BRUCE IN THE SHOULDER.



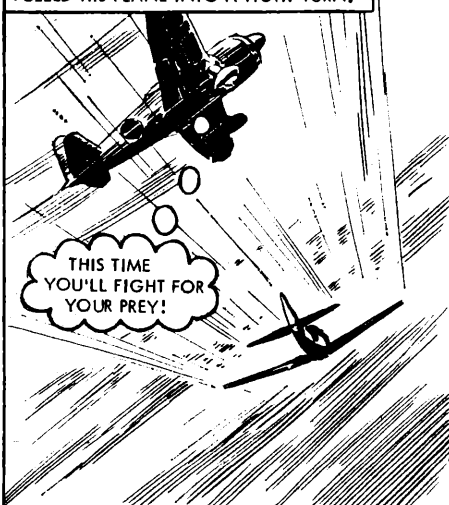
AS THEIR PLANE BEGAN TO SPIN EARTHWARDS, JOHN STRUGGLED OVER BRUCE'S SEAT TO GRAB AT THE CONTROLS.



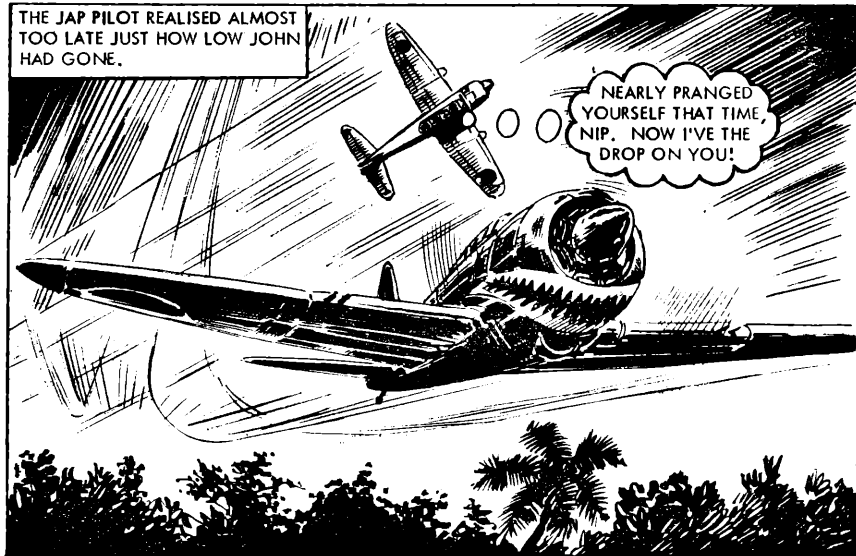
JOHN STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY WITH THE UNFAMILIAR CONTROLS, FINALLY PULLING THE PLANE UP IN THE NICK OF TIME.



THE ZERO ATTACKED AGAIN, AND JOHN PULLED HIS PLANE INTO A TIGHT TURN.



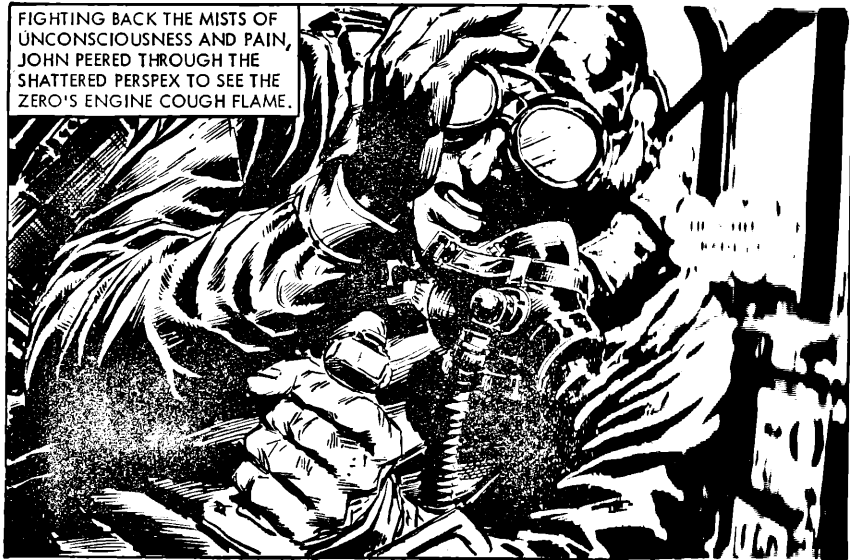
THE JAP PILOT REALISED ALMOST TOO LATE JUST HOW LOW JOHN HAD GONE.



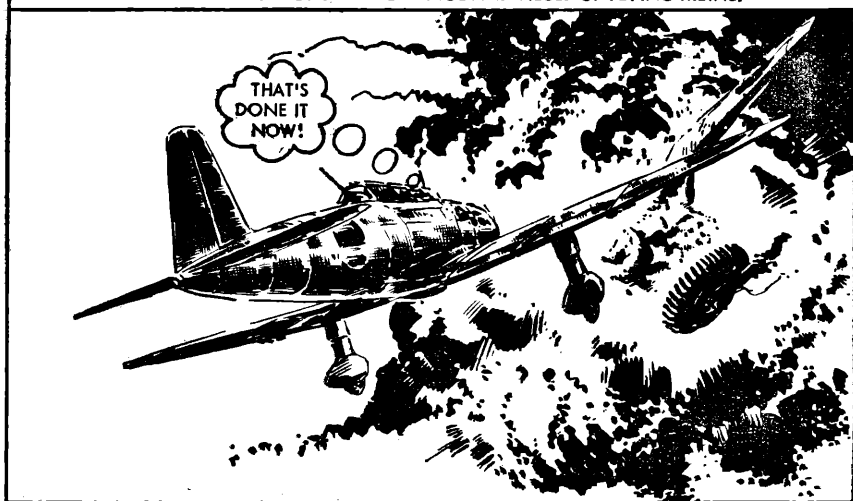
JOHN COMPLETED HIS LOOP AND CAME AT THE ZERO ALMOST HEAD ON. HE
FIRED AT ONCE, TEARING FABRIC AND STRIKING JOHN IN THE
THE HEAD.



FIGHTING BACK THE MISTS OF
UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND PAIN,
JOHN PEERED THROUGH THE
SHATTERED PERSPEX TO SEE THE
ZERO'S ENGINE COUGH FLAME.

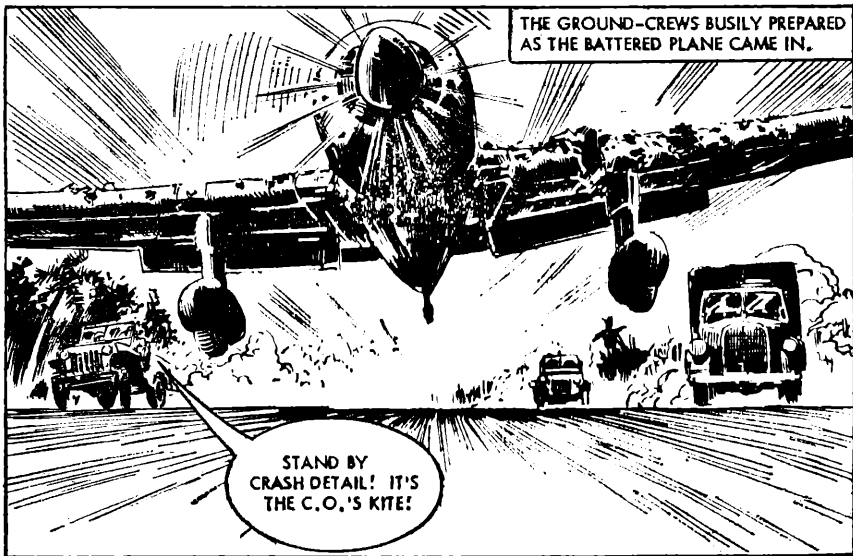
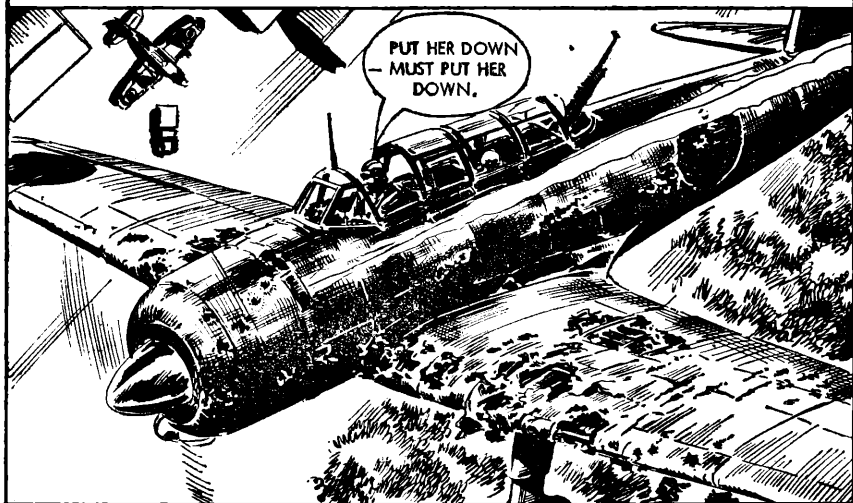


JOHN BORE DOWN ON THE STRICKEN PLANE, FIRING WITH FIERCE CONCENTRATION. AND, SUDDENLY THE AIR WAS FULL OF BLAZING PETROL AND PIECES OF FLYING METAL.

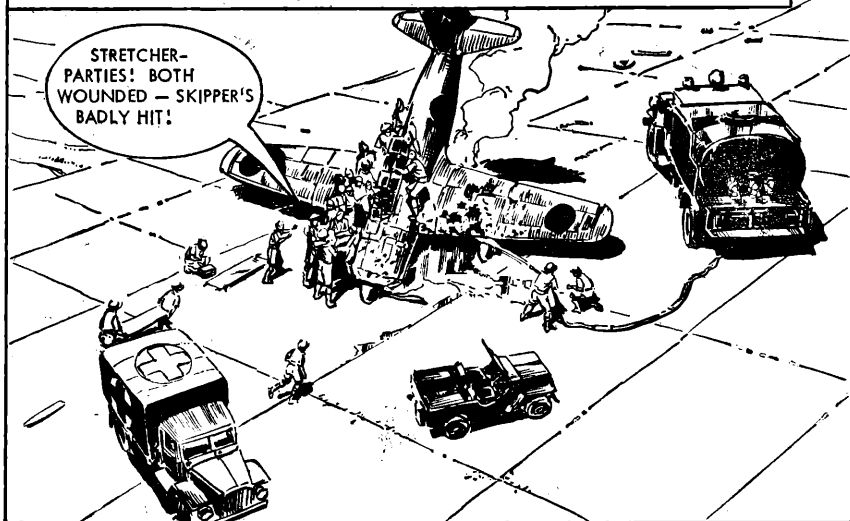


FAINT FROM LOSS OF BLOOD, JOHN TURNED THE PLANE'S NOSE FOR BASE, STRUGGLING EVERY MINUTE TO KEEP HIS EYES OPEN AS THE PAIN IN HIS HEAD SEEMED TO GROW AND GROW.

AFTER A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS NIGHTMARE FLIGHT, JOHN SAW THE BASE BELOW. HE SUMMONED HIS EBBING CONSCIOUSNESS IN ONE LAST GREAT EFFORT.



THE PLANE CAME IN, WOBBLING DRUNKENLY. IT TRUNDLED ALONG THE RUNWAY, THEN PITCHED FORWARD ON ITS NOSE.



JOHN WOKE UP LATER TO FIND HIMSELF IN THE AIRSTRIP HOSPITAL. HIS FIRST THOUGHT WAS FOR BRUCE.



THE DOCTOR'S NEXT WORDS GAVE JOHN A SUDDEN THRILL OF PLEASURE.



IT WAS TRUE ENOUGH. AFTER A BRIEF REST, BRUCE WAS POSTED TO A NEW SQUADRON AS C.O. WITH HIM WENT JOHN, AS SECOND IN COMMAND. THEY WERE JUST IN TIME TO CATCH UP WITH THE BIG PUSH AGAINST THE JAPS.

SEE THEM
RUN, JOHN? IT
DOES MY OLD HEART
GOOD!

TOO TRUE, SKIPPER.
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU
KNOW THEY'LL NOT BE ABLE
TO STOP UNTIL THEY REACH
TOKIO!

AND WHEN FINAL VICTORY WAS IN THE ALLIES' GRASP,
THE CREDIT WAS DUE TO SUCH MEN AS JOHN SAUNDERS
AND BRUCE WILDING — MEN WHO WOULD NEVER BOW
TO THE RISING SUN.

Commando
THE END



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No. 4

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ZERO! ZERO!

